

5G Mast in Westgate-on-Sea

Dear Mr King,

I am totally against the proposal to install a 20 metre mast on school playing fields, St Mildred's road Westgate-on-Sea, believing it shouldn't come under permitted development rights. Until these technologies are proven, masts should not be installed anywhere near children whose bodies are still developing and are at greater risk of harm by 5G radio frequency radiation.

I can confirm Westgate Town Council have been doing their utmost in fighting this proposal, with both officers and chair using every avenue to see what can be done to stop this travesty. The Chair of WosTC, Cllr Joanna Cornford recently spoke out vociferously against the 5G proposal to speaker Iain Livingstone at the Thanet Area Board committee of Thanet Town and Parish Councils.

On behalf of WosTC I recently liaised with TDC Director of Planning Mr Bob Porter.

Mr Porter discussed the issue of siting the mast in a conservation area at length with head of planning Iain Livingstone. Unfortunately, Mr Porter confirmed to me the mast doesn't require full planning consent, even in a conservation area.

The Permitted Development rights only enable TDC to look at two issues, impact on health and visual impact, and these have been considered.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance about whether any health implications of mobile phone masts can be considered as part of planning considerations. Planning law and policy requires that planning applications for electronic communications development should be accompanied by a statement or declaration that certifies that when operational, equipment will be compliant with the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields. The application in question was accompanied by an ICNIRP certificate. The NPPF is clear that if the ICNIRP certificate is signed, that is all that is required for planning permission purposes on health considerations within a planning decision (paragraph 118 of the NPPF).

Public Health England (PHE) endorses the ICNIRP guidelines for limiting exposure to radio waves. These guidelines cover many uses of radio frequencies, including Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and mobile technologies. The guidelines were updated in March 2020 and take full account of 5G operating at higher frequencies. In relation to 5G, PHE have said that “the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health”. Mobile companies are also required to ensure that their signals do not exceed the limits set out in the ICNIRP guidelines for the protection of the general public. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields#radio-waves>

In terms of visual impact, the report assesses the impact of the proposal on the heritage environment and considers that the development is acceptable in regards to its impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

I have been informed Mr Livingstone has reviewed the officer report, which assesses the context of the development, its visual impact, in particular how the design of the pole would sit within the context of the retained landscaping along the boundary. From reviewing the report, the plans and the site, the monopole would not affect the significance of Westgate Conservation area South as a designated heritage asset, taking account of the published Conservation area appraisal, and the development is therefore in accordance with Thanet Local Plan Policy HE02.

Mr Porter informed me TDC identified an error in that the report identified the site as being adjacent to but not in the conservation area. Having reviewed the report they do not consider that this detail would have changed the assessment.

Finally, I have been engaging with local resident Nicholas Wells and thank him for his forensic work on this subject. In particular, a Freedom of Information Request that KCC refused this application 2 years claiming there were potential risks. I must re-iterate I object strongly to the installing of a 5G mast on the school playing fields in Westgate-on-Sea.

Derek Crow-Brown

